(a) the names of the Ministers who have undertaken foreign trips since the Government assumed office;

(b) the countries visited and the duration of each visit;

(c) the total expenditure incurred on each of these visits in rupees and in foreign currencies; and

(d) the expenditure on the persons who accompanied the Ministers on each of these visits ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Augmentation of CRF

247. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Ministry had devised a long-term strategy for augmentation of Central Road Fund, private participation and enhancement of vehicle registration fee, etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the stage at which the implementation of the scheme stands at present,

(c) whether the plan for investment in road sector has been delayed; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (d) A Revised Resolution for augmenting the Central Road Fund has been passed by the two houses of Parliament in the year 1988. However, its implementation is still under the consideration of the Government. As regards private participation, Government has taken certain measures recently to attract private investment in the road sector. Guidelines have been finalised for taking up projects through Private Sector. There is no long term strategy for augmentation of Vehicle Registration Fee.

Emigration Racket

248. SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Touts would rather see emigrants die than return" appearing in the 'Times of India' dated January 16, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to check such emigration racket ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) On receipt of information relating to malpractices of this nature described in the article, the concerned agencies of Government are immediately alerted. The concerned agencies undertake the necessary investigations in order to prosecute those who are found guilty of such offences.

[Translation]

Swaranrekha Irrigation Project

249. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether all the families displaced by Swaranrekha Irrigation Project have not been given jobs, compensation and other facilities, even after several years;

(b) if so, the number of displaced families who have been given jobs, compensation and other facilities, and those who are still deprived of these facilities, till date;

(c) the reasons for not giving these facilities; and

(d) the efforts made by the Union Government to provide these facilities to all displaced families ?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

[English]

Visit by Foreign Dignitaries

250. SHRI V. PRADEEP DEV : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of foreign dignitaries who had visited India since December 1, 1996;

(b) the nature of talks held with them and the details of agreements signed; and

(c) the names of the countries, which have extended invitation to Prime Minister and the President to visit their countries and details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) A statement on foreign dignitaries who visited India since December 1, 1996 is enclosed.

(c) It is customary during such visits that invitations to the President and Prime Minister are extended by the visiting dignitaries to visit their respective country.